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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

GENERAL BOOKS AND BOOKS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

A Short History of Science. By W. T. SEDGWICK, Professor of Biology, and H. W. TYLER, Professor of Mathematics, in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. (New York: Macmillan Company. 1917. Pp. xv, 474. $2.50.)

No more difficult literary or historical task can well be imagined than writing a really good history of science. The author must have a sound appreciation of all periods in the history of civilization to depict the progress of science in its proper setting. He must have training in historical criticism and method to treat the past of science in a truly scientific spirit. He must be acquainted with all the particular sciences to present adequately their common story. Finally, besides organizing his material in due proportion and order, he must possess the literary capacity to translate and express in a fashion comprehensible to the general reader the difficult terminology of the natural sciences, the complexities of modern mechanism, and the abstractions of advanced mathematics.

Such a combination of faculties is seldom found in one person. In the volume under review two professors of biology and mathematics essay the task, and also call into requisition the services of many other writers. Indeed the book is often little more than a patching together of quotations, which are more often taken from secondary or tertiary accounts than from the sources. For instance, practically the entire treatment of Egypt, Babylon and Assyria, Phoenicia, and the Hebrews consists of long excerpts from Verschoyle's *The History of Ancient Civilization,* published in 1889. The ten pages devoted to Newton contain 116 lines by the authors, and 244 lines in smaller type from other writers. In general, some of the best foreign authorities are not used, little acquaintance is shown with recent monographs and detailed research in the history of science, and the quotations made are of very unequal worth and interest. The authors' own style tends to be dry and technical. However, the best parts of the book are where they cut loose from authorities and quotations, and write in their own words of matters with which they are personally conversant.

After nine chapters on ancient and medieval times, the remaining eight chapters deal with mathematics and natural science in the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. In each chapter the treatment is partly by topics, partly by persons. The appendixes comprise eight source-selections, a list of modern inventions, and a chronological table. Anthropology and archaeology are discussed somewhat, but psychology and the social sciences are not included. Radium, Roentgen rays, aeroplanes, automobiles, submarines, typewriters are not mentioned. Indeed, the work does not enter the present century.

The distribution of space is sometimes unequal. Two pages are given to Anaximander and Anaximenes, of whom we know next to nothing, and less than a page to Pliny and Galen, two of our chief repositories of ancient science. Why a page should be devoted to Petrarch in a history of science is hard to see. Although maps are discussed more than once and appear as illustrations, nothing is said of the medieval *portolani,* our first true maps, nor is Beazley listed in the bibliographies. A good feature is the emphasis upon Alexandrian science.

Some specific errors are the use (p. 8) of "Chaldeans" for the earliest inhabitants of Babylonia; the attribution (p. 22) of the planetary week to prehistoric instead of Hellenistic times (see Webster, *Rest Days,* pp. 215–222); and the ascription (p. 177) of the *Imitatio Christi* to Thomas Aquinas. The usual erroneous statements concerning Roger Bacon are repeated. Although they have read Rashdall's *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages,* the authors seem uncertain (pp. 175, 177, 186) whether Aristotle's works in natural philosophy were studied in the thirteenth century or not until the Italian Renaissance. They state (pp. 113, 255) that the arteries were believed to be air tubes from the time of Cicero to the sixteenth century, in ignorance of the fact that Galen proved by experiment that they contain blood.

LYNN THORNDIKE.

From Pericles to Philip. By T. R. GLOVER, Fellow and Lecturer of St. John's College, Cambridge, and University Lecturer in Ancient History. (New York: Macmillan Company. 1917. Pp. xi, 405. $3.00.)

READERS of Mr. Glover's *Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire,* his *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century,* and his *Virgil* will know what to expect in the present volume. It is not a systematic history. He does not attempt original investigation, but aims at a pleasant, Gaston Boissier effect of fluent commentary and quotation and modern instances within the framework marked out by the general topic. The present book, however, has rather less unity of composition than its predecessors and does not quite live up to its title. The first five chapters, the Traveller in the Greek World (Herodotus), the Age of Pericles, Thucydides, Athens in the War Time, Euripides, are a fairly consecutive study of Athenian civilization in the age of Pericles and the Peloponnesian War, though Aristophanes is cited only in illustration of wartime conditions. But the continuation of the story through the first half of the fourth century is skimped. The remaining chapters, with one or two slight exceptions, are little more than academic lectures on Xenophon under various disguises. There is no attempt to portray the life and